

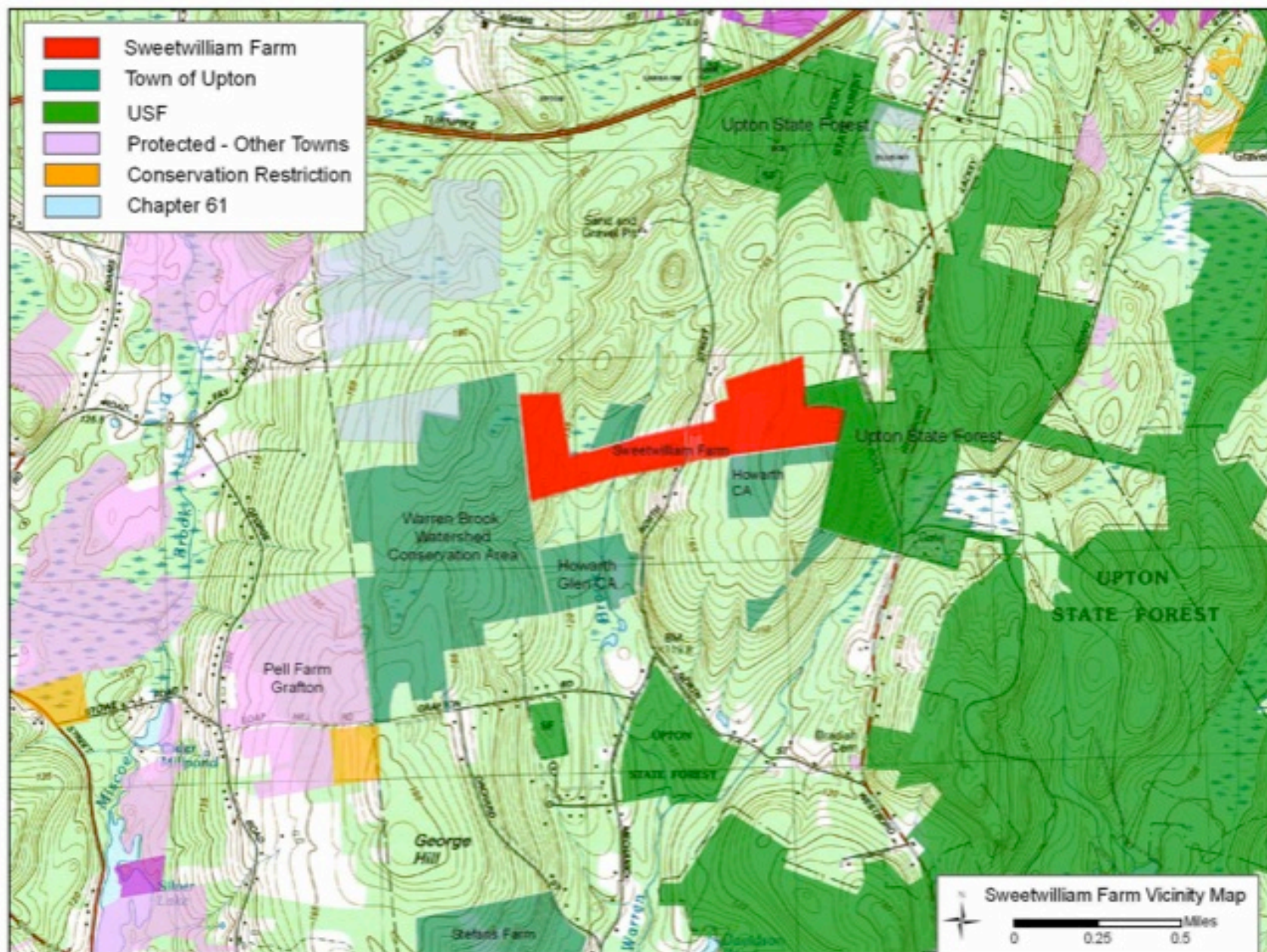
Sweetwilliam Farm Preservation Plan

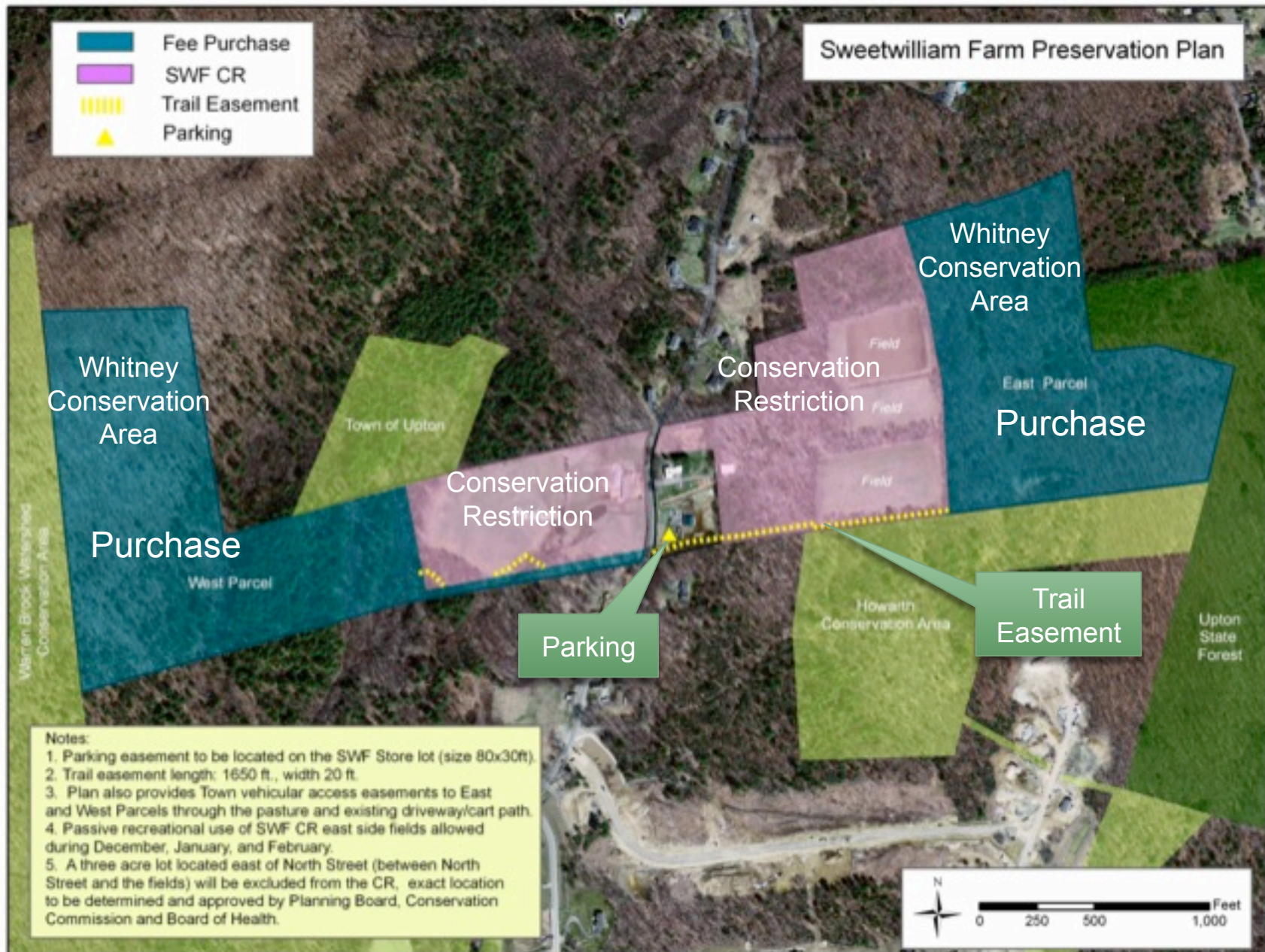
Special Town Meeting
January 11th, 2011

Upton Open Space Committee

Sweetwilliam Farm

- 92 acres off of North Street – includes pasture, hay fields, crop land and forest
- Spectacular view
- Links Warren Brook Conservation Area to Upton State Forest
- One of Upton's few remaining farms
- Farmed almost continuously since 1750





Conservation Restrictions

- Common tool to preserve land – also called **purchase of development rights**
- Landowner gives up right to build houses, but retains other rights such as agriculture
- Binding legal document approved by state and recorded at Registry of Deeds
- Future owners are bound by the restriction
- Owner continues to use the property and pay taxes

Recent Land Protection Projects with Conservation Restrictions

Many towns have purchased CRs to protect land...

- Grafton/Pell Farm/25 acres
- Southborough/Chestnut Hill Farm/109 acres
- Sudbury/Nobscot Hill Boy Scout Reservation/303 acres
- Sutton/Whittier Farms/314 acres
- Ware/Frohluff Farm/82 acres



Description of Sweetwilliam CR

Purposes - Protects views and scenic, agricultural, and historic resources

Limits use of land to agriculture/open space – no residential development

Trail easement

Vehicular access by town to town-owned land

Land is subject to property tax

Public access to hayfields December-February

Monitored by Upton Conservation Commission and Sudbury Valley Trustees

Permanent

**What are we
preserving...**

View From North Street



View Towards North Street From Pasture

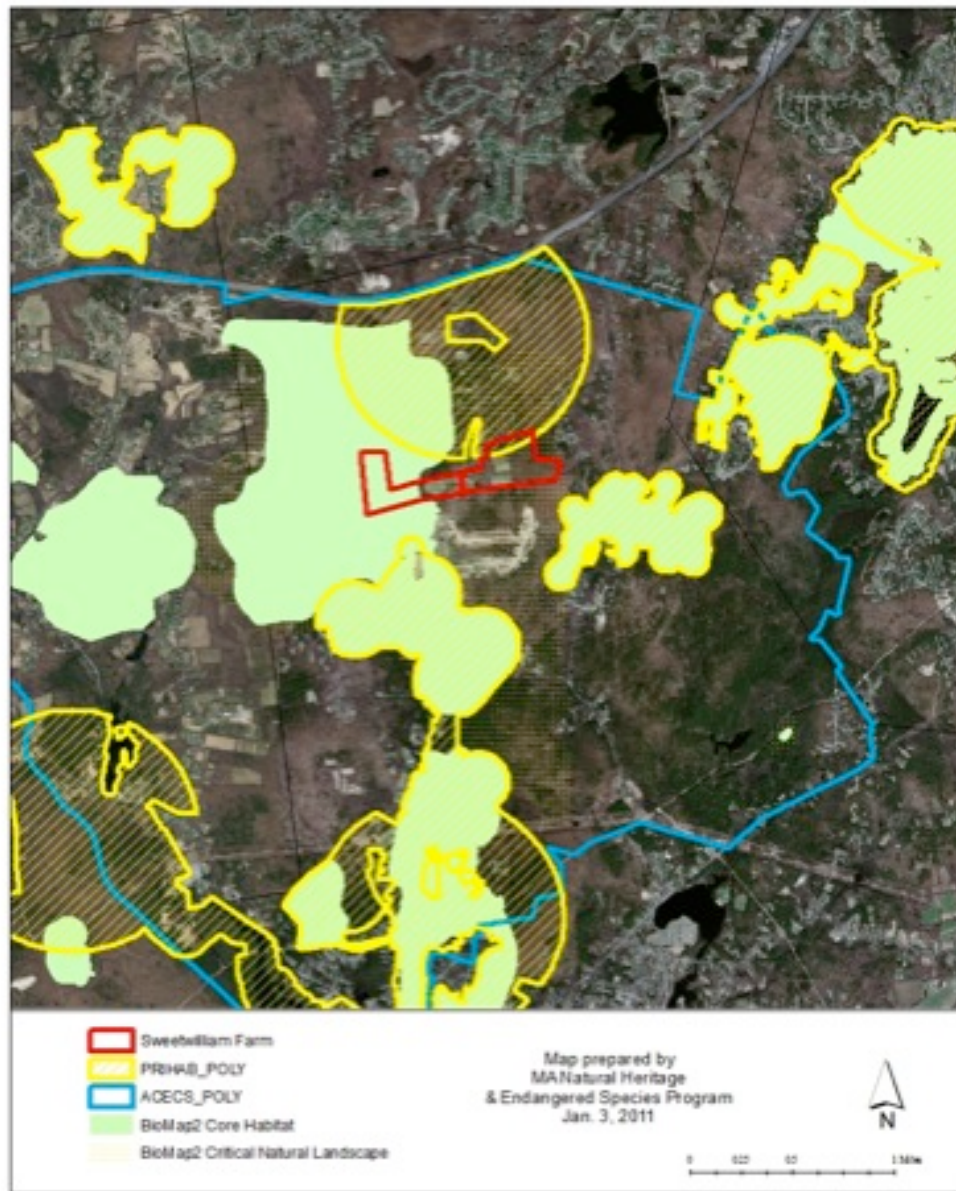


Natural Resources



- 80 percent forested
- Headwaters of Warren Brook
- Adjacent to 100's of acres of preserved land
- State recognized as significant habitat

Sweetwilliam Farm, Upton
Priority Habitat Map



Cultural & Historic Resources

One of Upton's original farms and a historic landscape

- Farmed almost continuously since 1750
- One of Upton's few remaining farms
- Pasture and hayfields remind us of the time when Upton was almost entirely open fields
- Farmed by 4 generations of the Whitney family from 1750 to late 1800s
- Two other Whitney homes nearby

Linked to an important Upton family and a significant historical figure

- Land originally purchased by Eli Whitney's grandfather
- Whitney's active in community affairs - Ephraim Whitney Jr. served in the Revolutionary War
- Town-owned land will be known as Whitney Conservation Area

Cultural & Historic Resources



Historic Landscape



Agricultural Resources



- Active CSA
- Prime agricultural soils
- 18 acres of hay fields & pasture
- Upton's agricultural heritage is being lost
- Almost none of our remaining agricultural land is protected
- MA Audubon ranks Upton 297 of 351 towns in agricultural land preserved

Passive Recreation



- Hiking, hunting, mountain biking, horseback riding
- One mile trail with convenient access and exceptional views
- Enhances value of all of the abutting open space by connecting trails and adding access
- Key part of a town-wide trail network and links Grafton to Hopkinton

How Much Will it Cost?

Where is the Money Coming From?

Community Preservation Fund	
Land/CR	\$1,175,000
Associated Costs	\$13,500
Total	\$1,188,500
LAND Grant	\$500,000
Other Grants/Donations	\$74,000
Net Cost to Upton	\$614,500

Everything comes from the fund

Total project cost – this will be paid from the fund

Reimbursements – these will be paid back to the fund

Must have \$574,000 in reimbursements lined up before making payments from Community Preservation Fund

What Was the Property Appraised For?

- Average of two appraisals conducted by independent licensed appraisers is \$1,277,500 – these appraisals are undergoing review by a third appraiser and preliminary results indicate that the Prospectus appraisal may be overstated – property owner has agreed to a lower price
- The two appraisals were needed for the LAND grant
- Purchase price of \$1,175,000 is close to the low appraisal value
- Cost to town of \$614,500 is under appraised value
- Appraised values were:
 - \$1,152,500.00 – Green & Moody Associates
 - \$1,402,500.00 – Prospectus LLC

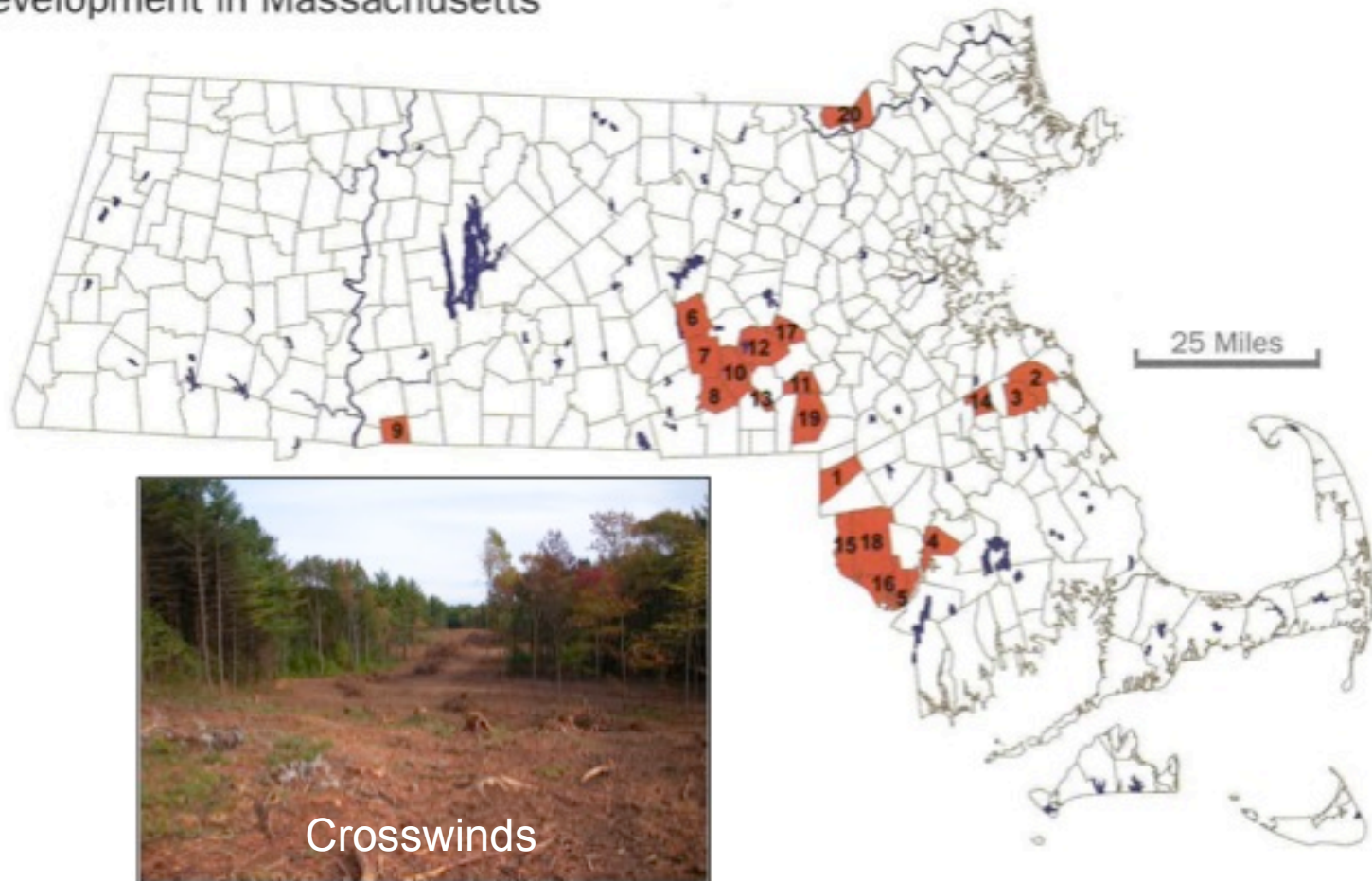
How Was the Property Appraised?

- Appraised based on amount a developer would be willing to pay:
 - + Expected number of lots
 - + Sale price of lots based on comparisons with recent sales
 - Costs to make lots buildable - roads, water, sewer, etc.
 - Financing costs
 - Cost of marketing and sales – realtor commissions
 - Developer profit
- Conservation restriction value equal to:
 - + Value of developable land
 - Value of undevelopable land – based on comparisons with recent sales
- Both appraisals estimated 20 lots and used comparable sales data available as of June 2010

Other Considerations

- A February, 2010 bank appraisal valued the land we are protecting at about \$1,600,000
- Additional value of the parking easement is not included in the appraised values
- Value of parking easement is estimated to be \$40,000
- If developed, cost of providing services to new homes may exceed property tax revenues
- Upton remains a development hot spot and the owner has competing offers on the property

Figure 1.3: Hot spots of development: 20 Towns with the highest rate of development in Massachusetts



What Community Preservation Fund Accounts Are Being Used?

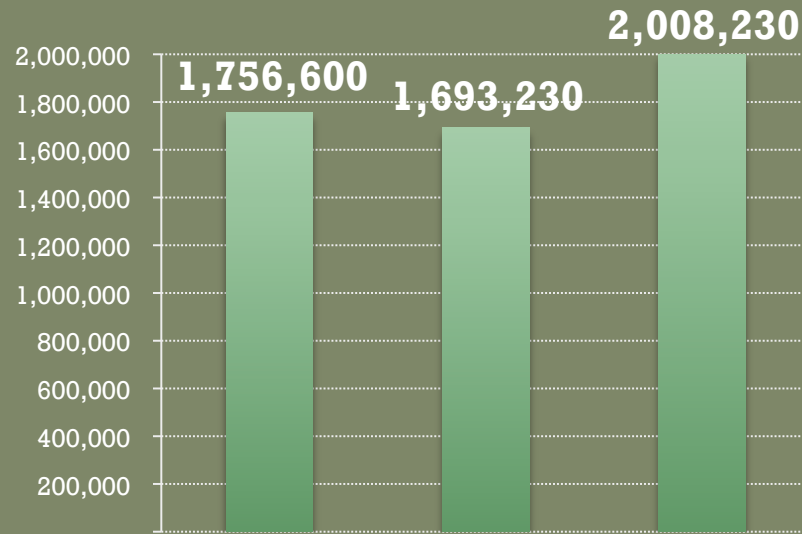
Account	Amount
Open Space Reserve	\$236,730
Undesignated	\$377,770
Total	\$614,500

Can only be used
for Open Space

Can be used for any
CPA purpose –
including recreation

All of the existing Open Space Reserve funds are being used

How Much Will Be Left In The Undesignated Fund?



- Funds available for other CPA projects
- Grants and other sources of funding available to supplement CPA funds
- Community Preservation Committee encourages project proponents to use other sources of funding

How Have We Spent CPA Funds?

Purpose	Amount
Upton Heritage Park (Historic, Recreation, Open Space)	396,207
Historic Resources	233,937
Recreation	154,915
Open Space	37,570
Community Housing	16,000
Total	838,629

Supported By Town and Other Organizations

Consistent With Town's Goals & Objectives

- Consistent with Vision Statements from the Master Plan
- Consistent with Open Space Plan
- Identified as a Priority Area for Protection in the Dodson Open Space Study

Supporting Organizations

- Upton Historical Commission
- Upton Community Preservation Committee
- Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife
- Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services
- National Park Service – Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission
- Sudbury Valley Trustees
- Metacomet Land Trust
- Fields Pond Foundation

Featured In the Master Plan



Upton Master Plan

Adopted July 2005

6.5 Scenic Resources & Unique Environments

6.5.1 *Inventory of Scenic landscapes*

There are many scenic landscapes within Upton. Here are brief descriptions of the landscapes with special distinction.

North Street

At the town border with Westborough (near the Mass. Pike), North Street travels southward for 2 1/2 miles and ends at Westborough Road. The road is very narrow, hilly, twisted and lined heavily with woods. The road opens up to a wonderful pasture that looks down into the Warren Brook Watershed. Here one passes three unique 18th century houses that are in good repair. This road offers a beautiful old New England setting.



Summary

Using \$614,500 in CPA Funds, Upton...

Preserves...

- The view
- One of Upton's few remaining farms
- A historical landscape
- Significant habitat
- Its rural character

Creates...

- Link between Warren Brook CA and Upton State forest
- Significant trail network
- Convenient access to this land and other protected spaces

Adds...

- Open space for hiking, horseback riding, hunting and other passive recreation activities

Thank-you!

